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Kitchens+

INSPIRATION AND IDEAS FOR PEOPLE WITH PROJECTS

Welcome to your magazine. Creating a new kitchen is one of the most exciting home-improvement projects and, whether you've built your own home and are planning your space from scratch, or if you're extending your existing kitchen for a larger open-plan cooking, dining and living area, *Kitchens+* will help you to make key decisions. Packed with planning advice, design inspiration and tips on making the most of your budget, this 52-page magazine is dedicated to helping you achieve your dream space.

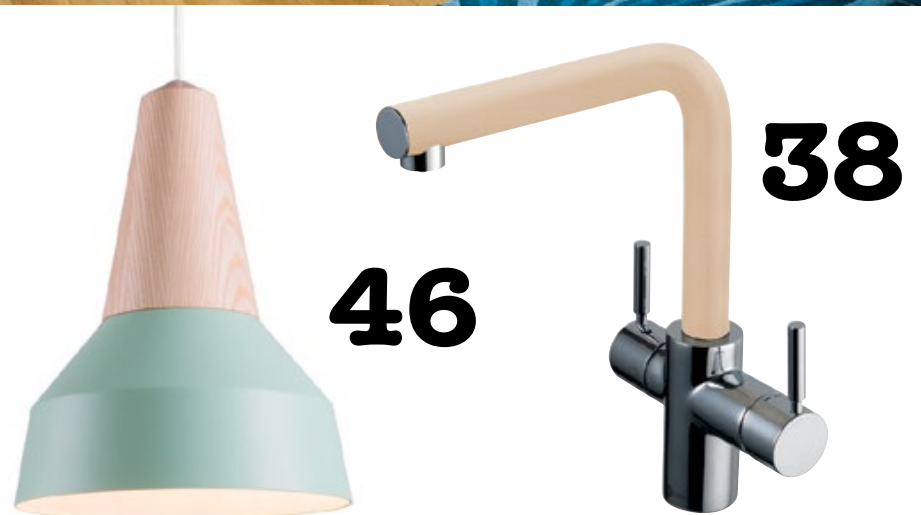
If you've recently extended, renovated or updated your kitchen and would like to share the secrets of your success – or if you have a question about your project – then please do get in touch by visiting realhomesmagazine.co.uk/kitchensplus.

Michael Holmes

**Michael Holmes, Content Director,
Centaur Home Interest**

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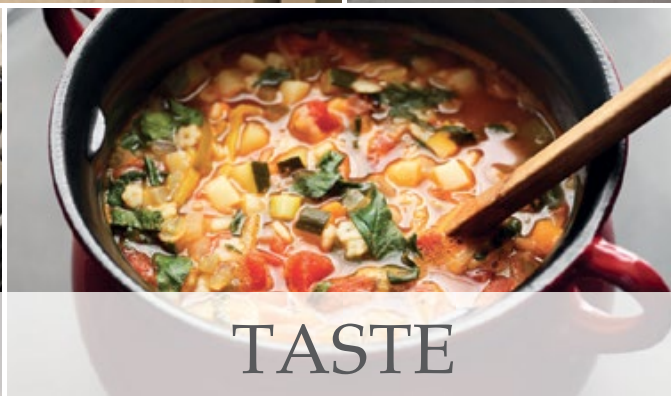
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Expert advice

Plan your perfect kitchen



The key to a successful design is firstly to explore all available options for the space, whether remodelling or extending your home, says experienced renovator Michael Holmes

From being a functional space, dedicated to domestic chores, the kitchen has evolved to become the heart of the modern home: a place where the whole family congregates throughout the day, sharing time cooking, eating, socialising, working and relaxing. Whether you are remodelling, extending or building a new home from scratch, the key to creating the perfect open-plan kitchen is to leave the detail, such as choosing units and worktops, until later and to focus on your living requirements and spatial design first.

How will you use the space?

The way you organise the layout and design of your new kitchen will depend on how you plan to use it. Ask yourself the following key questions:

COOKING Do you want to cook at an island or peninsular unit within an open-plan space like a TV chef, talking to family or guests, or would you rather be tucked away in a separate room? Does the type of food you prepare have special requirements in terms of equipment, worktops or extraction for strong smells? Do you want a large range-style cooker, such as an Aga or similar?

DINING Would you like an informal dining area in your kitchen, such as a breakfast bar or a small table and chairs? Will you be entertaining in the space and require a separate dining area, with a larger table and chairs, or will you have a dedicated room elsewhere?

LIVING Do you want to include a living space in the kitchen, with small armchairs or sofas? Would you like a fireplace or wood-burning stove to create a focal point? Or do you want a larger informal living area that is open plan to the kitchen-diner?

WORK Will anyone in the family expect to work from the kitchen, or do you need space for children doing their homework? Are there any special requirements, such as a desk or table built into the design?

UTILITY Can you find space for a separate utility room where you can do the laundry, hang washing to dry, or keep pets? Or do you want somewhere for extra storage, a boiler or hot water cylinder, or space for a cloakroom close to the kitchen?

STORAGE Do you want a walk-in larder, store or cold room?

LAYOUT There are lots of different ways to lay out an open-plan kitchen-diner/living room, ranging from completely open-plan to semi-open-plan, with doorways or informal dividers, such as fireplaces or open shelving, separating each function. An open-plan layout will help your home to appear more spacious and can make the most of available light, but by changing the shape of the room, and floor and ceiling heights, you can delineate different areas and add interest.

LOCATION AND ACCESS As one of the most important rooms in the house, the kitchen needs to be accessible directly from the main hallway or circulation space. If you are combining dining and living areas into your kitchen, it also warrants some of the highest quality space in terms of sunlight, views, access to the garden and privacy.

What are your options?

Once you have identified the space you need to meet all of the requirements of your kitchen, you can look at the choices to achieve the best design, from remodelling or converting the existing layout to extending or building from scratch.

REMODELLING You may be able to achieve the space you need by redesigning your home's existing layout, removing internal walls to link two rooms – typically a separate dining or living room – or by converting and linking an adjoining space, such as an integral or attached garage. These kinds of home improvement will, in most instances, not require planning permission (see permitted development and planning permission, overleaf).

EXTENDING If your home has a large garden, there may be potential to extend at the rear or side of your home. In a townhouse, it may make sense to convert and/or extend the cellar to form a lower-ground-floor basement storey, ideally with a lightwell leading up to the garden.

SELF-BUILD If your home needs extensive renovation and extension work to meet your living requirements, consider whether it might be more cost-effective to demolish the existing dwelling and build a new home on the site. New dwellings are zero-rated for VAT, while renovations and extensions are standard-rated at 20 per cent. If this option is for you, the advantage is that you'll have a blank canvas to work with, but the process of designing your kitchen and choosing where to locate it should follow the same design principles as for all successful projects. The added advantage will be the ease with which you can design the shape and form of the space and introduce integral features such as downdraft extraction, which requires venting beneath floor level.

Designing your kitchen

Before making any internal alterations to create more space, start by producing a survey of the current layout to scale; you can do this yourself or hire a surveyor. You can then commission a structural engineer to prepare drawings and calculations for the alterations, to demonstrate compliance with building regulations. No other drawings will usually be needed other than for the services, such as wiring, lighting and plumbing.

If you are planning to extend, drawings of the existing and proposed layout, elevations and design details will be essential if you need to make a planning application. The input of a good architectural designer will also be key to ensure that the kitchen is in the right location and has good access from the hallway and onto the garden or patio. They will help you to make the most of light, and plan the zones for cooking, dining and living. ►

Do you need planning permission?

Depending on your designs, the size of your proposed extension, and where you live – whether it's in a Conservation Area, for example, or if your home is listed – you may need planning permission. Discover what you can achieve with your property.

PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

Remodelling the layout of your home or converting an existing space, such as a cellar, loft or garage, is classed as permitted development (PD) and so automatically has planning permission without the need to submit an application. PD rights include small rear and side single-storey extensions, some small two-storey extensions (usually to the rear only), side or rear loft extensions, and small porches to the front. PD rights also allow for doors and windows to be altered or added, although any new side-facing windows at first-floor level or above must be obscure-glazed and fixed closed, unless 1.7 metres above floor level.

PD rights do not apply to apartments, and the local authority can remove or restrict them on a property, for instance because it is within a designated area such as a Conservation Area or National Park, or as a condition of a previous planning permission. It is, therefore, always worth checking which PD rights apply to your home before going ahead with any work. If you want certainty, you can apply to your local authority for a certificate of lawful development (the fee is typically the same as for a planning application), which will confirm that planning permission is not required for your proposals. Alterations to a listed building will always require listed building consent, even if the proposed extension or alterations constitute permitted development. Visit planningportal.gov.uk for more information.

PLANNING PERMISSION

Any extension that is not classed as PD will require permission from the local authority's planning department. Applications are made by submitting details and drawings of the project, together with the appropriate form and planning fee.

It is worth looking at local planning policy for your area at an early stage of the project to get an idea of what will or will not be acceptable. Many planning authorities publish supplementary guidance that identifies the rules by which a planning application will be considered. In general, extensions are required to look subservient to the existing house, and this may be defined more precisely by a maximum volume for any enlargements. For example, in one area the policy might be that the total volume of extensions should be no more than 40 per cent of the original dwelling. Other local authorities may have much tighter limits or no limit at all. The potential to add extensions will depend on where the property is: in the green belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or in the setting of a listed building, the scope is likely to be reduced. Conventional planning rules and guidelines on style and scale can often be stretched if there is sufficient justification and the design can be shown to comply with planning policy.

It is likely that you will need to submit extra information if you live near a flood zone or an area of ecological interest. A planning decision is usually made within eight weeks of the planning fee being paid and the application being registered.

Finalising the details

Once you are confident of getting planning permission, you need to start working on the construction detail. This includes the drawings (usually 1:50) that show how the space is to be built, and how it will comply with the building regulations. By this stage you will need to have finalised the layout of your kitchen and the position of the main appliances, as the drawings will include a wiring plan, plumbing layout and ducting routes. Your architectural designer should also produce an accompanying specification document. This, with the plans, will form the basis of the tender documents that will be sent out to builders to provide quotes.

Step-by-step of building work

1 GIVE NOTICE Whether you are renovating, extending or building a new home, the local authority building control department or statutory inspector will need 48 hours' notification of the start of work, as well as payment of the appropriate fee. Contact your local authority to find out the current fee scale.

2 DEMOLITION Work will begin with any demolition and site clearance.

3 PREPARATORY WORKS The groundworks and the oversite slab (concrete base) will follow to create a stable base for the structure of the extension or new house.

4 WEATHERPROOFING The structure will then be built to weathertight stage complete with roof, doors and windows. For an extension or loft conversion, this will be followed by knocking through to link the extension to the existing house; however,

a temporary partition may be added at this stage so that the house can remain habitable.

5 ESSENTIAL SERVICES The next stage is known as 'first fix', and involves fitting any new door and window linings, and all the plumbing, wiring and ducts. This will be hidden by the plastering, which follows.

6 PLASTERING The new door and window linings, plus plumbing, wiring and ducts, will be covered with plaster, which will be skimmed ready for chosen coverings to be applied.

7 ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES Once the plaster is dry, it is time for 'second fix', which includes laying flooring, hanging doors, fitting architrave and skirting, light fittings, and the kitchen.

8 CREATING A SCHEME The final stage of the build is decorating and tiling. Landscaping can follow at any time after the heavy building work has been completed.

Essential costs

WHAT WILL AN EXTENSION COST?

Prices will vary depending on the work carried out, but as a guide (all costs are excluding VAT):

- Remodelling existing space is likely to cost £500 to £800 per m²
- Converting a garage will cost £950 to £1,250 per m²
- A basic extension costs £1,050 to £1,450 per m²
- A more individual extension with bespoke windows and doors will cost £1,450 to £1,850 per m²
- Cellar conversions (no digging down) cost £1,150 to £1,350 per m²
- New basement extensions cost £2,500 to £4,000 per m² +



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Case studies

Kitchens, transformed!

Timber-framed design

The property

A detached, five-bedroom Welsh farmhouse in Flintshire, north Wales

The design brief

Previous owners had built a single-storey annexe to the house but it wasn't in very good condition, so the homeowners wanted to knock it down and add a kitchen extension within its footprint. The couple wanted the new space to enhance the existing property and to be in keeping with other buildings in the local area.

How it was achieved

Architectural company Paterson, Macaulay & Owens (PMO) was chosen to come up with the plans for the extension, and PMO thought Welsh Oak Frame would be the perfect choice for supplying the frame, so they met to discuss the plans for the new kitchen. Before it could be built over the footprint of the demolished annexe, however, the homeowners needed planning permission so that they could link the new kitchen with the farmhouse.

Fusing the extension with the style of the existing house was one of the trickiest parts of the design, but was achieved with a traditional Shaker-style kitchen from Unfitted, including a large central island with a granite worktop. There is also an informal seating area, which gives the space a relaxed feel.

The cost

The homeowners spent £50,000 on the new kitchen, bi-fold doors, flooring and furniture, while the building work and oak frame cost £150,000.

Contacts

Kitchen design Unfitted, unfitted.co.uk

Architect PMO, pmo-architects.co.uk

Extension frame Welsh Oak Frame, 01686 688000

Construction Gareth Williams of Bagillt, 07901 821472

Bi-fold doors Valdi

Flooring Beswick Stone

Appliances Bosch, Liebherr



The back of the extension is almost entirely glazed to provide a light and airy inside space

PHOTOGRAPHS NIKHILESH HAVAL



Rustic oak beams help the space to blend in with the farmhouse, and complement the natural limestone flooring from Beswick Stone and units from Unfitted. The pendant lights are from Jim Lawrence

If you're planning an extension, renovation or building your home from scratch, take inspiration from these stylish spaces to create your own dream kitchen





The splashback and veneered island introduce warmth to the scheme, which features a flush-fitting, ceiling-mounted Westin Stratus extractor fan

Contemporary extension project

The property

A terraced, four-bedroom house in south-west London

The design brief

As the homeowners wanted a stylish space for cooking, relaxing and socialising, within a new extension, Robert Burnett at Holloways of Ludlow designed a bespoke kitchen to fulfil their requirements.

How it was achieved

The couple had previously been advised by other designers that a structural column would be necessary at one end of the island, but they had been unhappy with that idea, regarding it as an unsightly intrusion. With his background in construction, Robert proposed a different structural solution, which enabled him to align the entrance corridor with the island and patio doors.

The 3.2m island unit is the focal point as it is directly in line with the front door. It is clad in a walnut veneer, which provides a textural element. At one end, curved drawers provide practical storage, while there is a seating area at the other end.

Large-format tiles running from the front door to the patio further accentuate the effect, and a built-in stainless-steel ceiling extractor fan has been positioned over the Miele induction hob on the island, offering an unobstructed view through to the garden.

Tall kitchen cabinets featuring Miele ovens and warming drawers on one side are mirrored on the opposite side by cabinets housing a fridge-freezer. The cabinets have been spray-lacquered in a semi-matt white finish to match the seamless Corian Glacier White work surfaces and provide a contrast to the warm tones of the walnut

veneer and the glass splashback, which has been spray-painted in Brinjal by Farrow & Ball. A walk-in pantry provides plenty of additional storage and, alongside built-in shelving, helps to define the kitchen space.

The cost

Kitchens from Holloways of Ludlow start from £25,000.

Contacts

Kitchen design Robert Burnett, Holloways of Ludlow,
020 7371 1787, hollowayskitchens.com
Worktops Corian
Appliances Miele, Westin



Using the same flooring throughout the space helps to unify the kitchen and living room

PHOTOGRAPHS (THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE) NICHOLAS YARLEY

Remodelled kitchen layout

The property

A five-storey, seven-bedroom Victorian house in Surrey

The design brief

The homeowners wanted to transform their large space into a well-designed family kitchen that would be suited to relaxed entertaining.

How it was achieved

They opted for a Shaker-style design by Robert Burnett from Holloways of Ludlow, who completely remodelled the layout in the existing space to provide the family with plenty of storage. A large island was created to bridge the cooking zone and family

dining area – the island unit, seating and cabinetry were all made bespoke to suit the unusual shape of the room. A large range cooker has been positioned centrally, as a focal point in the space. The in-frame cabinetry is painted in Suede III by Paint Library, and other finishing touches include an integrated walnut chopping board and sash-lift handles in polished nickel.

The cost

Kitchens from Holloways of Ludlow start from £25,000.

Contacts

Kitchen design Robert Burnett, Holloways of Ludlow,
020 7371 1787, hollowayskitchens.com
Appliances Mercury, Siemens



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Storage is integral
to the design, and
drawers have been
built into the island,
above which hang
pendant lights from
Holloways of Ludlow



Redesigned modern space

The property

A five-bedroom Victorian terraced house in Surrey

The design brief

The homeowners wanted a contemporary and fresh design with a touch of minimalist simplicity, though nothing too clinical.

How it was achieved

The homeowners agreed with kitchen designer Matthew Payne of Harvey Jones that wall cupboards might make the space feel smaller and add unnecessary clutter, so a mix of tall and base cabinets was chosen. This also made a feature of the extractor along the back wall, drawing the eye to the cooking area. To achieve the sleek, minimalist look set out in the brief, designer Matthew built the cupboards on site to ensure that they were symmetrical. He reversed one of the base cupboards in the island so that it faced outwards, creating a useful place for the couple's children to store crayons and colouring books, which they can access without going near the hob. The sink unit was cut around a support pillar so that the dishwasher would fit to the right of it, to prevent valuable storage space being wasted.

When it came to choosing a colour scheme, the couple were inspired by a black-and-white photograph of their town in the window of a local art and photography shop. They also wanted an island for food preparation, but decided against an overhang for seating because they preferred a separate table to give them the flexibility to move the table away from the patio doors in the winter.

Before the redesign, the U-shaped peninsular kitchen cut the room in half and dominated the central part of the space, as well as making whoever was in the cooking area feel trapped behind the units. In contrast, the new layout feels much larger and more open, and offers plenty of practical storage space for the whole family.

The cost

This kitchen cost £28,257, including the appliances, which were sourced by the client.

Contacts

Kitchen design Matthew Payne, Harvey Jones Kitchens, 0800 389 6938, harveyjones.com

Worktops Compac

Flooring Mandarin Stone

Appliances Miele

Sliding doors Heer ag



The units have been painted in Grey Steel 2 by Dulux for a contemporary finish, and the work surfaces are Alaska composite stone from Compac

PHOTOGRAPH DAREN CHUNG

Cabinetry has been cleverly designed to maximise space, with the Neff fridge-freezer integrated next to shelving

Discover the five things you need to know before extending at **realhomes** magazine.co.uk/kitchensplus/extending



Light-filled extension

The property

A four-bedroom Victorian house in north London

The design brief

Looking to create a large live-in kitchen-diner, which they could use as a family room and entertaining space, the homeowners wanted it to be as light and spacious as possible.

How it was achieved

Planning consent was needed for the rear extension that houses the new kitchen, but, as the property is in a Conservation Area, a number of planning guidelines had to be complied with in order for it to be granted. Build Team designed an extension that would be sympathetic to the existing style of architecture, using traditional materials that would enhance the property's overall character.

The clients' brief primarily called for a light, bright, contemporary kitchen and dining space, which was achieved by using steel, London stock bricks and insulated concrete slabs to open up the fabric of the building. Natural light has been introduced through bi-fold doors and three large rooflights, as well as a Velux sun pipe.

Continuing the flooring outside, with a level threshold, means that the inside and outside spaces flow together seamlessly when the bi-fold doors are fully opened. The family also wanted the kitchen to be as clutter-free and minimal as possible, so underfloor heating was installed as a high-performance heat source when combined with large porcelain floor tiles, avoiding the need for cumbersome radiators.

Once the side-return extension had been built, the couple asked Harvey Jones to design the kitchen, choosing handpainted units and teaming them with oak worktops for simple, classic style.

The cost

The side-return build came to £50,000, and the kitchen cost £25,000.

Contacts

Design and build Build Team, 020 7495 6561, buildteam.com

Kitchen design Lizzie Hagon, Harvey Jones Kitchens, 0800 389 6938, harveyjones.com

Flooring Tower Ceramics

Appliances Neff

Bi-fold doors Grabex

Underfloor heating The Underfloor Heating Store

Rooflights and sun pipe Velux





Bespoke kitchen units are teamed with riven white marble worktops. The large island has integrated warming drawers

PHOTOGRAPHS (THIS PAGE) DARREN CHUNG

Open-plan family-friendly room

The property

A three-bedroom, detached beach house in Essex

The design brief

Having lived in a Victorian boathouse for 30 years, the homeowners wanted a new home that would make the most of the beautiful location and views. They sold the older property and created this stunning kitchen in their new beach house, built in their previous home's grounds. The beach house is more contemporary in style, with a slate roof and cedar/rendered exterior. As the ground floor is open-plan, the kitchen design had to flow with the rest of the space, and the couple also wanted to ensure that it would be very sociable.

How it was achieved

The homeowners chose a Shaker-style kitchen from Davonport's Mersea range, opting for granite worktops in white, rather than black, to lighten the look of the space. There is a large central island unit, but the couple did not want a sink or appliances incorporated into it as it was designed to be a dining area as well as for food preparation. Using one side of the freestanding island for a seating area means that whoever is cooking doesn't feel cut off and can join in when entertaining guests. Miele appliances and a boiling water Quooker tap are practical additions.

The property is at right angles to the beach, which creates interesting aspects and views, so tumbled travertine floor tiles have been angled to tie in with the design of the house. Bi-fold doors open out directly onto a patio overlooking the water so that the views can be appreciated from the kitchen.

This open-plan space really is the hub of the home. Everything on the clients' brief has been achieved, and the kitchen combines the practicalities of both food preparation and socialising.



A steam oven by Miele sits within floor-to-ceiling storage cupboards

The cost

This kitchen cost £60,000, which included cabinets, worktops, flooring, appliances and new furniture, plus fitting and lighting.

Contacts

Kitchen design, worktops and flooring Paula Watts, Davonport, 0845 468 0025, davonport.com
Construction Rose Builders, 01206 392613, rosebuilders.co.uk
Appliances Miele, Quooker



Wine coolers built into the island are useful additions when entertaining

Relaxed kitchen-diner

The property

A five-bedroom, 100-year-old farmhouse in north Yorkshire

The design brief

As part of a complete house renovation, the walls between the existing kitchen, utility and boot rooms were to be knocked down and the space remodelled to create a kitchen-diner. The couple who own the house wanted to be able to cook, dine and entertain all in one room. The design also had to complement the local countryside scenery with a rustic look and feel, featuring warm timber tones.

How it was achieved

The team at Smith Ranson Interiors designed two areas within the kitchen-diner. The first was dedicated to cooking, with a large island for preparing food next to an Aga range cooker, plus a dining area. The prep area, with a built-in Miele coffee machine and wall-mounted TV, provides a relaxed feel.

A separate snug/living area was then created by removing the wall between the utility and boot rooms, with a bespoke sofa commissioned to fit the space. The homeowners are thrilled with their new kitchen/dining/living space, which works perfectly for them and is exactly how they wanted it to look – so much so that it's now where they spend most of their time in the house.

The cost

The overall cost of the kitchen was £43,000, including the building work, new furniture, appliances and lighting.

Contacts

Kitchen design Smith Ranson Interiors, 07906 439974, smithranson.co.uk
Kitchen units PWS Distributors
Flooring Mrs Stone Store
Appliances Aga, Miele, Caple
Dining chairs Middleton Design

Statement curved dining area

The property

A four-bedroom, 1960s bungalow set within eight acres of Dorset woodland.

The design brief

A retired couple were looking for a stylish kitchen to suit their home's rural setting. They wanted to enjoy spending time in the kitchen and be able to appreciate the views of the trees, deer and natural surroundings, also asking for plenty of contemporary details and features to suit modern living. The biggest challenge was to incorporate an existing structural pillar, which could not be moved.

How it was achieved

Kitchen designer David Pike of Mark Wilkinson Furniture worked alongside local builder Mark Courage of MJC Builders, who demolished one wall and incorporated the structural beams into a clever ceiling cloud [a lowered section] with extraction and lighting. The cloud shape echoes the semi-circular seating below, while the kitchen features underfloor heating and floor-to-ceiling sliding picture windows to make the most of the view.

Designer Charlotte Starling of Velvet & Dash Interiors worked with the couple and David Pike to draw up a mood board, and selected paints from Farrow & Ball for the walls and units. The island has been painted in Parma Gray, the side cupboards in Borrowed Light and the walls in Pointing. The homeowners completed the look with a fridge-freezer and dishwasher from Fisher & Paykel; all other appliances are from Miele.

The cost

The kitchen cost £75,000, including appliances, but excluding flooring, wall coverings and soft furnishings.

Contacts

Kitchen design David Pike, Mark Wilkinson Furniture, 01380 850007, mwf.com
Interior design Velvet & Dash Interiors, 01300 320657, velvet-dash.com
Construction Mark Courage, MJC Builders of Chickerell, 07887 753385
Worktops Caesarstone
Flooring Mandarin Stone
Appliances Fisher & Paykel, Miele
Sliding doors Panoramah
Underfloor heating Myson



A warm feel is created with worktops in Cashmere from Caesarstone and tumbled limestone flooring from Mandarin Stone

Multifunctional space

The property

A six-bedroom, renovated Victorian stable-block conversion in Essex

The design brief

McCarron & Co worked closely with the homeowners to create a family-friendly kitchen that would be practical and stylish. The couple had already decided that they liked the company's Hampton kitchen and were keen to incorporate a range cooker, microwave and steamer into the design.

How it was achieved

The kitchen is L-shaped, so McCarron & Co divided it into separate zoned areas for living, cooking and dining to create a space for the whole family to enjoy.

The team factored a corbel mantelpiece into the design, over the range cooker, as it would enable an extractor hood to be concealed behind it. To add further interest, the space was given a focal point in the shape of a walnut larder with an integrated fridge-freezer.

As a practical layout was a key requirement for the homeowners, the washing-up area, which overlooks the garden, has purposely been positioned close to the waste bins and dishwasher, while the island unit is located next to the larder for quick access to ingredients.

The integrated fridge-freezer by Miele sits within a bespoke larder



The positioning of the island helps to create a convenient working triangle layout, so that it is easy to turn from chopping and preparing food at the island unit to using the range cooker. Integrating the prep sink within the island, just a short step away from the range cooker, makes it particularly useful.

The cost

Kitchens from McCarron & Co are priced from £25,000.

Contacts

Kitchen design Richard Jackson, McCarron & Co, 01380 859299, mccarronandco.com

Flooring Artisans of Devides

Appliances Bertazzoni, Miele

Natural materials give a classic finish, with Sacho tumbled limestone flooring from Artisans of Devides and granite worktops. The units from McCarron & Co have been painted in Wiltshire White, and the range cooker is by Bertazzoni



Granite worktops, and an island painted in Bordeaux by Zoffany, create a distinctive finish. Hardwearing tumbled limestone flooring from Mandarin Stone is perfect for the well-used space



Reconfigured social hub

The property

A five-bedroom stable-wing conversion in Berkshire, dating from 1758

The design brief

In this busy family home, friends and extended family are always welcome – there are often a dozen or more guests at a time. The homeowners wanted a kitchen that would be in keeping with the 18th-century building, but which would suit the family's lifestyle and needs. The original layout had the effect of separating people, with some in the kitchen preparing meals while others relaxed in the living room. In the new design, the kitchen needed to be a more inclusive hub. The couple's requirements included an island unit, a larder and space for a large French sideboard in solid oak.

How it was achieved

Kitchen designer David Pike suggested a Mark Wilkinson English Classic kitchen, but there was some important building work to be done before it could be fitted. This included removing a wall of support arches under an old clock tower and installing structural steelwork instead, concealed behind timber beam cladding, and repositioning the door to the utility room. This

almost doubled the size of the kitchen. Two Franke sinks were set into the thick wall where the doorway had been, with a mirrored splashback feature creating the illusion that the working area of the kitchen is much more spacious than in reality.

Taking pride of place in the new room is the family's favourite piece of furniture – a sideboard, or 'buffet', as it is sometimes known, which provides useful extra storage.

Several social areas have been planned into the new scheme, including a family dining area with a bench seat that can accommodate a dozen guests. A raised top on the island has created a place to sit when others are working in the kitchen.

The cost

A similar Mark Wilkinson kitchen would start from around £40,000, including fixtures and fittings, but not building work.

Contacts

Kitchen design David Pike, Mark Wilkinson Furniture, 01380 850007, mwf.com

Interior design Jan Hicks Interiors, 01488 683986/07770 230686

Construction Deeble Construction, 01932 844236, deebleconstruction.com

Flooring Mandarin Stone

Appliances Falcon, Siemens

Period-inspired kitchen

The property

A six-bedroom detached house in the West Midlands

The design brief

Since buying their house 32 years ago, the homeowners had lived with their old kitchen as it was – although it was practical, the couple were the first to admit that it was in desperate need of a facelift.

Others also stood to benefit from a new kitchen, as it's the unofficial headquarters for a local charity lunch club that provides a two-course home-cooked meal for around 50 elderly members every week.

A well-designed space was called-for, with an efficient layout, as well as a large oven and fridge-freezer.

How it was achieved

Kitchen company Churchwood advised the couple to choose a period kitchen to suit the style of their home. Varnished pine

units and worn lino flooring have been replaced with hardwood oiled floorboards and a wooden Shaker-style kitchen fitted with stylish granite worktops. The handmade cabinets now provide ample storage space for all the catering crockery and cookware.

There is also a new six-burner range cooker and a double fridge-freezer, both from Britannia, and a small handwashing sink in one corner is a useful bonus for a kitchen with a catering focus.

The cost

The kitchen cost £30,000, including cabinets, appliances and fitting.

Contacts

Kitchen design Churchwood, 01298 872422, churchwood.co.uk

Flooring Quick-Step

Appliances Britannia Living

PHOTOGRAPHS (THIS PAGE) DARREN CHUNG





If you're
designing a large
kitchen, find advice
at [realhomes
magazine.co.uk/
kitchensplus/
planning](http://realhomesmagazine.co.uk/kitchensplus/planning)

The Bleached Oak finish of the Driftwood kitchen units from Henderson & Redfearn echoes the look of the flooring for a cohesive scheme

Contemporary streamlined style

The property

A four-bedroom bungalow with large grounds in north Essex.

The design brief

With very specific ideas about how their kitchen should look, the homeowners wanted a bespoke design featuring clean lines, lots of curves, and a fresh, distinctive look. It also had to be suitable for their pet dog, a Great Dane. They asked for a large central island, an Aga cooker, plus workable cooking and living areas where the family could do everything from entertaining friends to eating and cooking as a family and doing homework.

Although the couple love wood, they didn't want a standard wood-fronted kitchen or any eye-level units, and requested handleless units and hidden storage for small appliances, from the toaster to the breadmaker. An American-style fridge-freezer was another must-have, but without it being on display.

How it was achieved

The couple had looked at countless options and called in designs and quotations from several kitchen specialists before deciding

on a handmade kitchen from Henderson & Redfearn. So that the new design could work in the existing structure, a door had to be moved and a chimney taken out.

The design includes floor-to ceiling units to conceal the fridge-freezer and a spacious larder, plus a wine cooler and a separate drinks fridge. Every unit was individually handcrafted in solid oak, while the curved central island is a fusion of quartz and solid oak.

As requested, everyday electrical appliances can be stored behind neat tambour doors while remaining easily accessible. The family often cook together, so in addition to the main Aga there are two gas hobs, a wok hob, a steam oven and an integrated microwave.

The cost

The kitchen cost around £50,000, including the building work and appliances, but excluding the Aga.

Contacts

Kitchen design Henderson & Redfearn, 01255 861943, hendersonandredfearn.co.uk

Appliances Aga, Siemens, Westin

Sink Franke

Tap Quooker +

Style guide

Freestanding updates



Combine on-trend but classic neutrals with a warm colour, as in this Moderne kitchen finished in Sandy Shore (units) and Eggplant (island) from Fired Earth. Made from oak and maple, the Shaker-style base units and island are fully freestanding, while a Falcon range cooker in stainless steel adds a modern look. The island has a Caesarstone Lighter Sands worktop in contrast to the Caesarstone Darkest Earth worktops elsewhere. A Moderne freestanding kitchen costs from £12,000 for units and worktops, excluding fitting.



This traditional wooden kitchen from Unfitted combines Shaker-style freestanding cabinets, a large central island and a larder dresser, plus shelving units. The moulded frames have plain drawers and Edwardian doors finished in Heritage Brushed paint in Blue Ribbon, as well as 40mm oak worktops with rounded edges. Cast-iron cup handles finish the scheme, while a retro-style Gorenje fridge-freezer and a cream range cooker lighten the look. This kitchen costs £12,100, excluding fitting.



Mix and match different coloured units and freestanding pieces with wooden finishes, such as in this Shaker kitchen in walnut and oak by John Lewis of Hungerford. The island is finished in satin eggshell, and the wall cabinets, painted in Pesto, come with matching shelving for displaying items. The walnut base units feature granite worktops. The kitchen is supplied with a small butler sink and swivel-spout tap, and costs from £20,000, including worktops, appliances and fitting.



This Pedini Arts & Crafts kitchen in Canaletto walnut and laminum (porcelain), with a gloss and glass detail and leather straps on hinges, is made up of individual freestanding pieces. The variety of worktop thicknesses – in laminum, stainless steel and wood – and the contrast between matt, glass and gloss gives a contemporary feel. The ovens, coffee machine and fridge-freezer are cleverly concealed within cabinets, while lean-to shelving units provide attractive storage. This kitchen costs around £40,000 for the furniture and fitting.

Plan a kitchen that's perfect for you and your lifestyle with furniture that can be easily moved to create a new look



If you're tight on space, this all-in-one freestanding Vision unit in Ocean Blue soft lacquer from Rational Kitchens offers everything you need for a working kitchen. Measuring H218xW184xD76cm, it comprises storage shelves, pull-out deep pan drawers, a sink, hob, extractor, microwave, dishwasher, fridge and pull-out breakfast bar for easy dining, and the bi-fold door can be closed when it is not in use. Available in a range of finishes, additional units can be added if required. The Vision kitchen costs £3,000, excluding appliances.



Schmidt Kitchens' Aragon range is available both fitted and freestanding. These stained, solid oak units in matt black and white are teamed with laminate worktops in Nocce, but the units are available in five stained finishes and 12 open-grain colours. Three large dresser-style cabinets make up the kitchen, with a sink, storage and appliances, while a freestanding wine cooler and fridge-freezer complete the look. Kitchens start from £10,000, including worktops, appliances and fitting.



Fired Earth's freestanding oak Vermont kitchen is painted here in Andaman Sea (island), Dover Cliffs and Smoke Blue (units), and finished with worktops in Caesarstone Crystal Stone and Blackened Rock. In keeping with a period look, an Aga cooker, butler sink and plate rack are featured. A splashback has been created using Fired Earth's Paris wall tiles in Isabelle, W12xL12cm, £9.95 each. This kitchen costs from around £10,000, including worktops, sink and tap, but not fitting.



Create a unique design by combining individual pieces with fitted cabinets to suit your needs. Barnes of Ashburton's handcrafted, bespoke kitchen in solid chestnut has a natural finish and features units with 30mm Indian black granite worktops, plus a matching freestanding island and tallboy designed to individual specifications. The island unit has a 30mm maple worktop in keeping with the scheme, and provides ample space for a breakfast bar and pan storage. This kitchen costs £30,000, including appliances and fitting. ►

Style guide

Luxury designs & finishes



Valcucine's Meccanica by Demode is a modern, industrial-style kitchen that's customisable so you can add and remove elements to suit your needs. Made from birchwood and iron with multi-layered laminate worktops, it includes a mix of cabinet storage with integrated appliances alongside exposed shelving units for an attractive display area. The central island features an overhanging worktop that can be used for casual dining, while an induction hob blends into the work surface. This kitchen starts from £30,000, including fitting.



This bespoke, open-plan kitchen by Woodstock Furniture features American black walnut and matt grey cabinetry in a combination of cupboards, drawers and shelves at alternating levels to add interest. A matching 3.2m island unit with an integrated sink provides additional space for food preparation and an informal dining area with bar stools. A glass splashback complements the Compac Snow quartz worktops. This kitchen costs around £40,000, including fitting.



Barnes of Ashburton designed this bespoke limewood kitchen with a distressed finish using Farrow & Ball's London Clay, Light Grey and Charleston Grey paints. The traditional-style 3.5m island for dining, food preparation and storage provides an elegant contrast to the stainless-steel appliances, including a large Sub-Zero fridge-freezer. There is also a statement canopy hood above the Aga and Miele ovens. A similar kitchen would cost around £40,000, including appliances and fitting.



This contemporary high-gloss Elemental kitchen in Parapan was designed by Mowlem & Co as a contrast to the architecture of a Georgian property. It features a Marmara marble centrepiece bar, customised storage, including a tall cabinet and larder, and Caesarstone Osprey worktops, with glass splashbacks. A Wolf range cooker, Westin extractor hood, built-in Siemens fridge-freezer and Franke stainless-steel sink finish this elegant scheme. A similar kitchen would be priced from £30,000, including fitting.

Add wow-factor to your space by investing in a high-end design and handmade units



An L-shaped design makes the most of the space in this grey matt lacquer Urbo kitchen by Roundhouse, finished in Dulux 30BB 10 019 and featuring stainless-steel worktops for a contemporary look. Oak shelving warms up the scheme, while accents of lime-green create a stylish contrast. A peninsular breakfast bar/island unit provides dining and cooking space, with an extractor hood built into the ceiling above, while integrated appliances create a streamlined scheme. Kitchens from Roundhouse start from £35,000, including appliances and fitting.



Designed to put the chef centre stage, the walnut Grosvenor kitchen by Davonport features a large, rectangular island with a marble worktop and convex curved edges, and includes an integrated Wolf hob, Franke sink and ample storage. A bespoke extractor hood above is tiled with ceramic mosaics for an elegant finish. There is also an adjoining dining table where friends and family can sit while meals are being cooked. A similar kitchen would start from £35,000, including fitting.



Siematic's BeauxArts.02 kitchen features a grey, matt lacquer finish with StoneDesign worktops in Carrara marble. The bevelled, stainless-steel-fronted glass cabinets mounted on one wall, and stainless-steel appliances, update the classic Shaker-style units with a contemporary twist. Dark wooden flooring and accents of richer tones throughout the space warm up the overall scheme. Kitchens from Siematic start from £30,000, including furniture and fitting.



A bespoke, handpainted kitchen by Rencraft, in Chalk White tulipwood, is perfect for this classic oak-framed property. The units are contrasted with granite worktops picking up the colour of the iron knobs on the cabinets. A ceramic sink, plus an Aga and built-in Neff appliances, add to the farmhouse feel. An informal dining area has been created by extending the island with a circular oak table, while a dresser features perforated zinc panels instead of glass. A similar kitchen would cost £37,500, including fitting but not appliances. ►

Style guide

Shaker simplicity



Gala is the latest addition to the stylish yet affordable lifestyle range by Crown Imperial. A fresh take on classic Shaker style, this kitchen incorporates a distinctive curved island, oak knob handles and Crown's Encore crystal-black and crystal-white worktops, which are sold separately in three-metre lengths. The budget-friendly, wood-effect cabinetry costs from £5,000 for a full kitchen and can be finished in 13 house shades, including Oyster as shown, or a primed finish to decorate in your chosen colour. The price excludes fitting.



Both contemporary and affordable, the Grey Oak Shaker kitchen by Trend Interiors, featuring 100 per cent solid oak cabinetry, is a natural take on the timeless Shaker design. It is shown with a freestanding glazed dresser and an island/breakfast bar with an elegant granite worktop. The full kitchen cabinetry costs from £7,000, excluding fitting, while the granite worktop is priced between £100 and £500 per m, depending on the thickness chosen.



Neil Lerner's solid wood-frame Bristol kitchen combines Shaker cabinetry with a tongue-and-groove splashback and built-in open shelving for a stylish look. In contrast to the neutral-painted finishes of most Shaker kitchens, this Midnight Blue, ash lacquer style gives the traditional cabinetry a contemporary edge, which is complemented by warm larch worktops. The full kitchen cabinetry costs from £15,000 and includes fitting but not appliances.



This bespoke kitchen by Rencraft, made from tulipwood and handpainted in Farrow & Ball's Pavilion Gray (base and wall units) and Railings (island unit), is teamed with hardwearing quartz worktops. As well as doubling up as a breakfast bar at one end, the large island features a built-in fridge, preparation sink and additional storage. Rencraft kitchens are designed and made to individual requirements and cost from £16,000 for cabinetry only, excluding fitting. The worktops are supplied separately.

Whether you're planning a traditional or contemporary scheme, this timeless option can be customised to suit your space



This elegant Stanton painted kitchen by Caple features cabinetry with a solid ash wood frame, internal moulding and a veneered ash centre panel. It comes in a choice of 10 house shades – this style has been painted in a combination of pastels, including Alabaster (island unit) and Baby Blue (base and wall units), which give the scheme a calming yet eclectic feel. This kitchen costs £10,450 for the cabinetry only and excludes fitting. The worktops and appliances are supplied separately.



Creamery Kitchens' Living range is freestanding and styled on contemporary furniture. The kitchens are mainly constructed from pine, with 30mm oak worktops and stainless-steel T-bar handles. They are handpainted in a selection of Farrow & Ball colours, including French Gray as pictured. A typical Living kitchen, configured from a range of unfitted units, costs from around £5,000 for the cabinetry and worktops, but this price excludes appliances and fitting.



The Ashbourne kitchen from Masterclass Kitchens is a classic Shaker design featuring doors made from solid oak. Pictured here in a combination of subtle light and dusty greys, this style is available in 15 painted finishes, as well as a primed option ready for painting in your chosen colour. Masterclass kitchens cost from £7,500, which includes the cabinetry as well as basic appliances and fitting. The Bianco Carrara quartz worktops, shown, are supplied separately.



This kitchen, from Schüller's Casa range, gives traditional Shaker style a modern interpretation. Its features include curved corner units in silk-gloss laminate, as well as on-trend open shelving with inclined supports providing a soft, elegant touch. Available in a choice of six colours, the kitchen shown here is finished in Agate Grey and offset by warm laminate K505 Natural Knotty Oak worktops. A similar configuration to that shown would cost from £5,355 for cabinetry only, excluding fitting. The worktops are priced at £70.90 per m.

Style guide

Contemporary spaces



Combining functionality with style, this elegant new kitchen from the Rococo collection by Crown Imperial is MDF-based with a durable, matt finish in yellow and white (also available in nine other colourways). It features twin islands with acrylic Minerva White worktops, plus appliances, such as a coffee maker, microwave and double ovens from Luce by Hotpoint, as well as a Liebherr fridge-freezer with a wine compartment. This kitchen costs from £20,000, excluding appliances and fitting.



The stylish Metz Savanna kitchen is one of the latest additions to Caple's designer collection and perfectly showcases the new streamlined trend, with matching plinths and integrated handles. It comes in a neutral palette with beige, lacquered high-gloss doors and contrasting stone-grey cabinets. Curved and concave doors and end panel options add to the sleek look. This kitchen costs from around £6,800, which includes fitting but excludes worktops and appliances.



Holloways of Ludlow offers this contemporary bespoke kitchen that features a sculptured island, made from Corian in Glacier White, and a mix of laminate MDF white cabinets to complement its off-black, toughened-glass splashbacks. The design also includes a Blanco Gutmann extractor fan, Miele dishwasher and wine fridge, a built-in microwave and fridge-freezer from Siemens and a Mercury range cooker. A similar bespoke kitchen would cost around £80,000, including cabinetry, worktops, appliances, splashbacks and fitting.



A good budget choice, the ice-blue Esker kitchen by Wickes has a metallic, acrylic finish and polished chrome handles. Pictured here with a range of mid-height appliances, Satin Grey Slabtech worktops and a smart timber breakfast bar linking the kitchen and living spaces, the Esker kitchen can also include integrated living units (just seen in the background), such as storage options, to create a cohesive space. This kitchen costs from £5,000 and includes appliances and fitting.

Combine the latest materials and finishes with simple modern details to achieve the ultimate kitchen



Two bold new colours, Arizona (red) and Cacao (brown), have been introduced to the diverse Loft range from Schmidt Kitchens. Designed to give your space an injection of warm tones for an inviting ambience and an on-trend look, the collection is available in either a ready-to-paint or a lacquered finish, with a choice of 26 matt colourways, plus the door fronts can be either smooth or grooved. Schmidt kitchens cost from £10,000 and include worktops, standard appliances and fitting.



This design from Siematic features new SE3003 cabinetry, as well as the latest S2-R doors with signature raised edge, and showcases the current trend for metallic materials. The island has handleless cabinetry in a Lotus White and Gold Bronze silk-gloss finish, and a StoneDesign worktop in Supreme White, while the wall units are finished in Umbra. Other shades available are the new metallics Nickel and Matt Black. Siematic kitchens cost from £20,000, including fitting but not appliances.



This contemporary Contour Curve design from Metris Kitchens features an ergonomic layout that will appeal to keen cooks, with the curved peninsular unit doubling up as a useful dining and seating area. Here showcasing the new Chalk Blue colourway, teamed with Porcelain White wall units, the cabinets feature integrated Gaggenau appliances, plus there is an Elica downdraft extractor hood. A similar kitchen from Metris would cost from £25,000 including the appliances and fitting.

realhomesmagazine.co.uk/kitchensplus



Rational Kitchens' high-gloss lacquer Onda kitchen is teamed here with Vesuvius laminate worktops for a striking yet cohesive look. The oval island forms the focus, while floating worktops, standalone storage and exposed shelves complete the design. The cabinet interiors are also finished in black, and there is a choice of 21 other soft lacquer finishes. Sleek, black integrated appliances continue the scheme. This kitchen costs £8,000 and excludes appliances and fitting.

Style guide

Natural woodgrain



Made from sustainably sourced European wood, this modern take on a farmhouse-inspired kitchen features bespoke storage solutions, integrated lighting and appliances. The Loft kitchen by Team 7 is priced at around £45,000 from Wharfside for fitted cabinetry as shown, in Wild Oak treated with natural oil, and excluding appliances. The island – with solid wood dining table and chairs included – costs an extra £28,800, and the dark green granite worktop is an additional £1,590 per m². Beech, alder, maple and walnut are among the wood options available.



Mix timber and painted finishes, as in this bespoke kitchen by Teddy Edwards, from the company's contemporary Silverstone range. With cabinetry constructed from solid bleached oak, the design features Shaker-style tall cupboards painted in Warm Grey, a cupboard for appliances, a large island with built-in sink and hob, and a Compac Carrara quartz worktop. Prices for complete kitchens in the Silverstone range start from £48,000, including cabinetry, worktops, appliances and installation.



In the latest, streamlined styles, timber kitchens are perfect for introducing warmth into a contemporary space. The Richmond design from John Lewis features solid wood doors in a choice of finishes – light oak, as shown, or antique oak. It is pictured fitted with dark worktops and modern brushed nickel handles, although more traditional options are also available. John Lewis Richmond kitchens are priced from £10,000 for the cabinetry only.



Characterised by traditional-style doors, with decorative raised-and-fielded centre panels, the Carnegie design from Masterclass Kitchens has a classic elegance. Here, an ash central island painted in Olive complements the Lancaster Oak fitted cabinetry, as well as being a practical addition to the kitchen layout. Design details, such as glazed cabinet door fronts and the feature canopy above the hob, provide a sophisticated finish. Kitchens from Masterclass cost from £7,500 for the cabinetry/furniture and fitting.

Warm and rustic or sleek and refined, the latest timber kitchens offer a sustainable and hardwearing option with classic appeal



With its modular approach, Timothy Oulton's freestanding natural wood kitchen furniture can be designed to suit your space and, if you move home, would be easy to take with you to your new property. Shown is the kitchen cook's table, H92xW200xD126cm, from £5,825; island with tap, H95xW202xD128cm, from £8,500; English reclaimed timber large wine rack, from £5,075 for H254x W187xD39cm, and English reclaimed timber butler's cupboard, H255xW49xD167cm, from £3,500, all as pictured.



On-trend inspiration

The bespoke Brasserie kitchen by Smallbone of Devizes takes its inspiration from a range of influences, from wine bars to industrial style, with the oak used chosen for its knots and character. Shown in Warm Pickled Oak, the design also comes in Natural Oak and a palette of painted colours. Prices for a bespoke brasserie-style kitchen start from £40,000, including a choice of worktops, such as brushed stainless steel or Nero Assoluto black granite, as well as appliances and fitting.



Shaker kitchens are often painted for a classic look, but this bespoke design in walnut, by Harvey Jones, makes a feature of the woodgrain's natural beauty. In a choice of walnut or oak – as well as a primed finish ready for painting in your preferred colour – Harvey Jones' Shaker kitchens are handmade to individual design requirements, using traditional joinery techniques, and are priced from £18,000 for the cabinetry and fitting, as standard.



A handmade kitchen, beautifully crafted, will show off a wood finish to its best advantage. The Neptune Henley kitchen cabinetry from Kit Stone is handcrafted from American oak and is shown here teamed with White Kashmir granite worktops, sold separately at £300 per m². Henley kitchen cabinetry is available on a modular basis – the freestanding island, H89xW149.5xD84.5cm, costs £2,795 individually, for example – and is priced from £20,000 for a full kitchen, for the cabinetry only. +

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Expert advice

Know your rights

When you're buying a new kitchen, hiring design and fitting professionals, and updating your appliances, it's vital to be aware of your consumer rights. Use this guide to keep up to date with how the law can protect you

With a third of homeowners looking to carry out work on their home in the next three years, spending up to £6billion on improvements*, it makes sense to take steps to ensure the best quality finish for your budget. If you are planning a large-scale renovation project or kitchen extension, or updating your existing space, finding the best deals from reputable traders and hiring the right professional will help to prevent any costly mistakes.

Finding a reputable supplier

Buying and fitting a new kitchen is a big investment of time and money, so it's worth researching suppliers and fitters thoroughly to find the best deals. Choosing trades accredited by regulated industry bodies can help to resolve any issues that may arise, such as your builder failing to turn up on time, or if work carried out isn't of satisfactory quality, as you can approach the accreditation board for a dispute resolution.

'Where possible, buy a kitchen from a supplier you know and trust. In some situations, kitchen providers may offer you a special deal, which is legal, but if it seems too good to be true, it probably is,' says Kevin Byrne, founder of Checktrade. 'Ultimately, prevention is better than cure, so researching and checking facts is key.' If you're looking for a professional to help on your project, find a reputable trader by using regulated databases. Search by your postcode to find one near you.

- **Checktrade, checktrade.com**
- **The Institute of Kitchen, Bedroom and Bathroom Installers (IKBBI), ikbbi.org.uk**
- **Kitchen, Bedroom, Bathroom Specialists Association (KBSA), kbsa.org.uk**
- **Trustmark, trustmark.org.uk**
- **Federation of Master Builders (FMB), fmb.org.uk**

DID YOU KNOW?

The average spend on a new kitchen in the UK is £8,000, according to *Which?*

How to protect yourself, from purchase to installation

Keept a record of any quotes, briefs or communications with a supplier and have in writing what the agreed price covers, including who is responsible for disposing of the old units or appliances. Before committing to a payment plan, check out the company on Trading Standards' Buy With Confidence Scheme, which lists reputable businesses.

Paying by credit card is advisable as purchases are protected under the Consumer Credit Act, so if a company goes into liquidation before

delivery, you'll be entitled to a full refund – this covers purchases between £100 and £30,000, but never pay the full balance of the job before completion.

Goods must be fit for purpose when they arrive. 'If you made requests regarding the design, they must be as promised. If you ordered units on a supply-only basis, you can reject goods on delivery if they are faulty,' says Peter Stonely at Trading Standards. If you have any issues with the kitchen after it is fitted, talk to the supplier and keep a record of any action.'

What to do if you've fallen victim to a rogue trader

According to the FMB, 41 per cent of us would rather pay a professional than take on a DIY project. If you hired a tradesperson to fit a kitchen or carry out other work and the results are not satisfactory, contact Citizens Advice about your rights. If you think a company or professional is a rogue trader, get in touch with Trading Standards, which will investigate.

Choose a professional who offers a contract setting out an agreement, but if a contract is in place and problems occur afterwards, you may still be protected. 'If you've signed a contract, you have 14 days to cancel if it was signed at home, unless you'd agreed to an immediate start and signed a form,' says Brian Berry of the FMB. 'If the contract doesn't have a 14-day cooling off period then it may not be binding, so always check the terms.'

If a tradesperson fails to turn up, call for an explanation. 'Give them a second deadline to start work and, if they don't turn up again, get quotes from other fitters and warn the first supplier you'll recoup extra costs from them,' says Amanda Diamond at Which?. If the work is not up to scratch, ask the tradesperson to rectify it. If a company disappears before fitting is completed, recuperation can be lengthy. Pursue all means of contact with the trader and, if there is no response, contact Trading Standards or Citizens Advice, or take legal advice. ►

Choosing who to work with

When shopping for a new kitchen or investing in fixtures and fittings, follow these tips to ensure you're protected if things go wrong.

DO YOUR RESEARCH Get at least three quotes before you commit yourself, and obtain references. Ask friends or family for recommendations and look to trade associations for vetted trades as most organisations offer a third-party complaints procedure. 'Reputable kitchen sellers will have fitters they employ and, although they may be more expensive, it is safer having a retailer that will offer support if things go wrong,' says Kate Faulkner of Property Checklists.

COMPARE PRICES One reason people go with rogue traders is that they offer to do work for cash, but if you agree to it, you'll have no protection. Once you have all your quotes, compare what you're paying for. Look at how much is allocated to materials and the percentage for labour costs, and ask questions if the numbers don't add up. The cheapest quote may not be the best value, so always read the details and query any grey areas.

READ CONTRACTS THOROUGHLY If any terms are vague, ask for an explanation, and check the payment schedule in the contract to ensure you can meet it. Keep a record of agreements and file all correspondence.

DID YOU KNOW?

While 55 per cent of people fear they'll be ripped off by a builder, 29 per cent worry that they'll make a major mistake.*

How to finance your project

SAVINGS 'If you have savings, putting those towards buying a new kitchen as a first option is a no-brainer,' says Jo Gornitzki at Money Saving Expert. While it is best to budget and save up before making a large purchase, it could be worth putting a portion of the total amount on a credit card to benefit from added protection under the Consumer Credit Act. 'If you buy anything between £100 and £30,000, the card supplier is jointly liable, even if you pay only a small portion of the total on a credit card.'

CREDIT CARD If you haven't any savings, the cheapest way to borrow is by using a credit card, so you can look for the best interest rate and still have the added protection. With some providers, you can get zero per cent APR for up to 20 months, as long as you make consistent monthly repayments. To avoid losing the zero per cent rate, set up a Direct Debit for at least the minimum repayment as soon as you're accepted, or work out how much you'll need to repay each month to clear the credit before the end of the interest-free period. If you haven't paid off the balance by the end of the contract, you can transfer the balance to another zero per cent

APR card to benefit from a longer timescale. However, disciplined repayments are key when using this type of credit card, because if you miss a repayment, you'll be charged for late payment and the zero per cent period will cease.

LOANS A limitation of credit cards is that most offer a £5,000 limit, depending on your credit score, so if you want to borrow more, a loan from a bank or financial lender may be better. 'One option is to investigate whether a lender offers zero per cent finance, but make sure you understand the terms and ensure there is nothing in the small print that means you'll pay interest,' says Jo Gornitzki. 'If you take out store instalment credit, you'll typically get the same protection as if you're buying something on a credit card, unless the credit is provided by the store itself, but do check.' You can also take out a personal loan, but approach this with the plan of borrowing as little as possible and paying it back in a short time to avoid paying a hefty amount of interest. Typically, loans will be subject to yearly interest, so shop around for the best rates using comparison websites or getting quotes from different suppliers.

How to plan your budget

Always have a good idea of how much you're willing to spend and work with a designer to create a kitchen that is right for you,' says Hayley Shaw at Magnet. 'It is easy to get carried away when planning, but remember that all the little extras add up, so have a list of essentials that are within your budget and stick to it.'

Next, decide on the look you want to achieve and allocate a set amount of money for each aspect, including units, flooring and appliances. Once you've decided on the look, you can quickly eliminate kitchens that don't fit your chosen style and concentrate on finding your dream kitchen at a price that suits you. Allow for a minimum 10 per cent contingency budget,

in case of unexpected plumbing, building or electrical costs. 'Even when you keep your spending in check on units and appliances, try to avoid moving key utilities, such as plumbing and electrics, as this can significantly increase costs,' Hayley Shaw adds.

Think about how you'll use the new space and make sure that the design matches your needs. Invest in appliances and design details that you'll use. If you want a high-tech oven, then spend less on another component. Bear in mind that a bespoke kitchen will cost far more than an off-the-shelf design, but you can mix and match to create a high-end look by using the latest laminate worktops or flooring designed to look like granite, marble or stone.

Best supplier discounts

If you're looking for new fixtures and fittings at fantastic prices, take a look at these outlets.

GREAT FOR APPLIANCES

John Lewis Home Outlet

Located in Swindon, the John Lewis home-clearance shop offers a large selection of furniture and appliances that are imperfect or have been returned, but which are on sale at heavily reduced rates. Stock changes rapidly, but all electrical items still have a 12-month guarantee. Visit johnlewis.com/our-shops/swindon-outlet.

GREAT FOR DECORATING

Fired Earth Factory Shop

Find paint, wallpaper, wall or floor tiles, plus fixtures and fittings at a fraction of the price, with up to 70 per cent off. The factory shop in Adderbury, near Banbury, Oxfordshire stocks end-of-line ranges, ex-display stock and discontinued lines. Visit firedearth.com.

GREAT FOR A COMPLETE LOOK

The Used Kitchen Company

Specialising in selling ex-display kitchens and used kitchens from private clients, this is an ideal destination for a new look at reduced cost, including units, worktops and some appliances. Visit theusedkitchencompany.com.

GREAT FOR DESIGNER FURNITURE

Ercol Factory Outlet

If you're looking for iconic designs to furnish your kitchen-diner, the Ercol Factory Outlet features ex-display items, seconds and returns at brilliant prices. Visit the store in Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, or go online to ercol.com/efolist.

CREDIT PROTECTION

The Consumer Credit Act protects card purchases, compared to when paying by cash or cheque, so retrieving funds between £100 and £30,000 is easy if things go wrong.

3 of the best budget planners

Use these handy tools to help manage your spending:

finances and see how much disposable income you have left to invest in a project.

THE WHICH? BUDGET PLANNING CALCULATOR lists all the key costs that are involved in a kitchen project, and it will keep track of your proposed outlay and the actual cost.

MONEY SAVING EXPERT'S BUDGET PLANNER is a free money-managing tool that helps you to analyse your

For an idea of what you can achieve with your budget, **SAINSBURY'S BANK HOME RENOVATIONS CALCULATOR** breaks down a property into room projects, and supplies information based on price brackets. It will provide you with a rough guide on what you can achieve within each bracket, including when you are renovating a kitchen.

ESSENTIAL UPDATE

Current changes to the Consumer Rights Bill will give people more rights to send back goods. For details, visit parliament.uk

3 ways to get the best deal

1 TAKE YOUR TIME

Don't be rushed into accepting the first good quote. Instead, ask for prices in writing from three or more different retailers, including online providers.

2 LOOK FOR LAST YEAR'S STOCK

New kitchen ranges are constantly being developed, but that doesn't mean that last year's looks are less stylish or not suited to your needs. Research the market for special discounts or last year's stock, as many

stores are often willing to sell it at much-reduced rates.

3 ALWAYS HAGGLE

There is nothing wrong with asking for a discount – in fact, it is built into some stores' policies to allow for a discretionary manager's reduction if you're brave enough to enquire. A poll by Money Saving Expert found that 70 per cent of shoppers had success when haggling at B&Q, and 73 per cent at Homebase, so remember to ask in the high-street chains.

How to add value to your home

The visual impact of a kitchen on a prospective buyer can have a significant effect on the perception of worth. Consider this advice from Hugo Tugman, co-founder of Architect Your Home.

1 An open, light-filled kitchen will be more appealing to a buyer than the drawer fronts, but keep it simple. Clutter, such as small appliances and kitchen paraphernalia on worktops, will make a space appear smaller. A kitchen with fewer lines and a layout with uninterrupted runs of

worktops and cupboards will look more attractive.

2 Maximise the space. By knocking through a small kitchen and small dining room, you can create two zones in one space, each of which will seem bigger than the rooms were before. Floor-to-ceiling glazed doors with a view out to a garden also enhance a sense of space and help increase value.

3 Make sure you plan in essential, good-quality appliances before you buy any of the latest gadgets.

NEED TO KNOW

Faulty appliances

Your consumer rights allow you to take action if you buy an appliance and it fails to do its job. The Sale of Goods Act 1979 says a product must be of satisfactory quality, fit for purpose and match the given description. If these criteria aren't met you can ask for a repair at no additional cost, a replacement, a refund or partial refund. It is unlikely you'll get all of your money back if you've kept the goods for too long before telling the trader (check the supplier for their timeframe) or tried to repair the goods yourself. If you think the goods are unsafe, don't use them and report it to Trading Standards.

REGISTER YOUR ITEMS

Once you've bought a new appliance, register it at registermyappliance.org.uk to receive updates about any issues with the design, if it is recalled or needs repairs.

DID YOU KNOW?

Figures from Citizens Advice show that 4,626 people in England and Wales had a problem with their new fitted kitchen in the period from October 2013 to September 2014.

Useful in-store services

Shop around for the best deals for kitchen units, fixtures and fittings, wall coverings and flooring, and take advantage of in-store help to find an installer.

B&Q HOMEFIT With best practice relationships with TrustMark, The Furniture Ombudsman FIRA Gold and BSI, this service helps you find experienced and qualified professionals, with a five-year workmanship guarantee and payment protection from your first payment to project completion. Ask in store for details or visit diy.com/diy/homefit

HOMEbase 'WE'LL DO IT FOR YOU' Whether you want help wallpapering, tiling or laying a new floor, Homebase's installation team can help. Call for a quote and to arrange a home survey at a time to suit you. The service comes with a two-year tradesperson guarantee, meaning any defect will be rectified, as long as it is reported within 10 days of identification.

More advice online

On social media? Follow these key industry-led Twitter feeds for essential up-to-date news and advice for all your consumer needs.

@CitizensAdvice
@MoneySupermkt
@MoneySavingExp
@MartinSLewis
@BBCWatchdog
@MoneyMattersUK +

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Easy updates

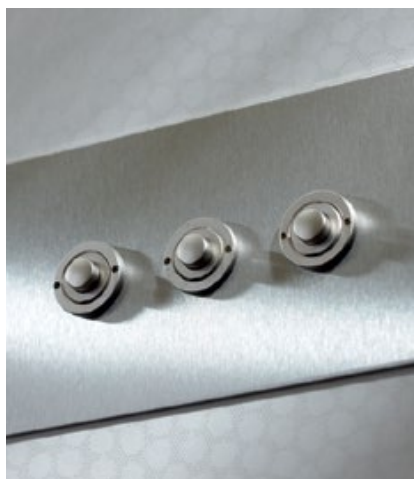
Fixtures & fittings

LIGHT SWITCHES

You should aim to match the material and finish of your switches to the sockets, in order to create a sense of cohesion in the design. As kitchen lighting is primarily functional, the likelihood is that you will be specifying on/off rocker switches as opposed to dimmers, although if your kitchen incorporates a dining area, it's a good idea to include dimmable lighting to create ambience when entertaining. If redesigning a new scheme with an electrician, include separate circuits for the ambient (background) lighting and focused task lighting, and think carefully about where switches are positioned.



The Colours steel-effect, one-gang 10A light switch from B&Q, H8.5xW8.5cm, £2.98, is perfect for industrial schemes.



Forbes & Lomax's three-gang rotary-button dimmer switch has a stainless-steel face for a classic look, H9xW15cm, £128.38.



Wickes' one-gang 10A light switch has a raised polished chrome faceplate with softly rounded edges for a modern look, H9xW9cm, £5.49.



The Chelsea one-gang rocker switch in a Marilyn pink lacquer finish, H8xW8cm, £185 from Haute Déco, is perfect for a glamorous room scheme.

HANDLES AND KNOBS

The choice of cabinet ironmongery will have a big impact on the overall look and feel of your kitchen. There are plenty of contemporary and traditional designs in a variety of materials, whether you're after pull handles or knobs. Consider the layout of your kitchen first: will you be including tall cupboards; are there going to be lots of drawers for cutlery and pots and pans; will there be a lot of overhead units? Knobs are better-suited to drawers, whereas long handles make vertical units easier to open. Mixing and matching the two in the same material will offer the best of both worlds and create a characterful look.



This Peridot smooth cupboard knob from Merlin Glass sits on a polished brass collar and is ideal for adding a splash of colour to plain kitchen cabinets. Dia.3.5cm, it can also be specified in a nickel or chrome finish, priced £20.



Haute Déco's Mini Hemisphere cabinet knob in Copper features a polyester-resin surround. It will offset a high-end kitchen scheme beautifully and works in classic and contemporary schemes alike, H4.3xW4.3cm, £120 each.



Ironmongery Direct's antique-style ring pendant cabinet handle, Dia.3.5cm, is made from a zinc alloy with an aged brass finish – ideal for period properties. It costs £1.32, or £1.06 for 10.



This antiqued bronze shell handle from Crown Imperial is great for adding an elegant touch to traditional farmhouse-style kitchens and is suitable for drawers. Measuring W3.5x L10cm, it is priced at £6.60.

There's more to designing a kitchen than specifying units and worktops. Choose from the latest accessories to finish your new space, from high-tech taps to period-style ironmongery

SINKS

Your choice of sink will be a key factor in determining the overall look of your kitchen. Traditional Shaker-style schemes are likely to feature Belfast or butler sinks, with either one-



If worktop space is at a premium, Astracast's compact Dart sink is the ideal solution, measuring W86xD50cm for a 1.5-bowl design. The sink is manufactured from Astracast's ROK composite material, which offers a durable, heat-resistant surface with antibacterial properties. Its clean-lined design has a recessed drainer that channels water back into the bowl. Dart is available in four ROK colours (shown in Opal White), including granite and metallic finishes, and costs £199 for the one-bowl sink and £299 for the 1.5-bowl design.

bowl or 1.5 bowls. However, for modern, streamlined kitchens, sinks that are built into the worktop or sit flush with the surface – often concealed by a removable chopping board to make the most of available space – will suit the look perfectly.



Created by American kitchen designer Mick de Giulio, this award-winning Multiere one-bowl sink from Kallista is made from durable stainless steel in a brushed finish. It features a corner drain to maximise on usable bowl space and includes accessories, such as a colander holder, plantation teak chopping board and flatware tray for rinsing cutlery. The sink's clever design means the various components are tiered to create a multifunctional work space. Multiere measures W114.5xD46cm and is priced on application.



Astracast's Elan sink is an affordable option for contemporary kitchens, priced £120 for a one-bowl design and £175 for the 1.5-bowl W98xD51cm option shown. It has a durable stainless-steel finish and the main bowls are able to hold up to 24 litres – ideal for cleaning large pots and pans. The Elan can be specified with an accessory pack, including a steel bowl grid, wooden chopping board and colander.



Handmade in England, the Shaker 800 sink from Perrin & Rowe is perfect for traditional-style kitchens, thanks to its elegant single-bowl design made of hardwearing fireclay ceramic. The sink is available in White and off-white Biscuit, and has a central waste outlet to accommodate a basket strainer or waste disposer. It measures a generous H28.5xW76xD46cm and costs £521.



With its stylish matt Volcano Black finish, Wickes' ROK Metallic 1.5-bowl is designed to suit contemporary kitchens. It's made from durable ROK composite, which is scratch-, stain- and heat-resistant, able to withstand temperatures up to 360°C. The linear drainer provides easy water run-off, and the raised tap deck adds to the modern aesthetic. Measuring W98xD50cm, it costs £199.

SOCKETS

Often overlooked, one of the most important fixtures of your kitchen will be the power sockets that you plug everyday appliances into. Whether you specify sockets to match other

brassware around the kitchen, such as door handles in brass, chrome, gold-plate or copper, or whether you're after transparent sockets so as to not detract from the tiles or wall covering, there are plenty of options on offer.



The SensioPod pull-up socket by Sensio, from £80, features a slim-profile design with aluminium casing and a chrome handle. It has three sockets and two USB ports, and can be retracted fully while products are plugged in. With an IP54 rating, the Dia.10cm socket is safe to be fitted near sinks.



John Lewis' Kitchen Pop-up Socket in black, Dia.10.5cm, features three sockets and two USB ports for multipurpose, everyday use. Priced at £175, it's ideal for installing into central island units and pops up from the work surface with a simple push.



Varilight's low-profile 13A double-switched socket, H9xW15cm, £9.98 from B&Q, features a screwless design for a clean look and has an on-trend brushed Mocha finish.



This two-gang 13A socket with steel switches and a hammered plate has a beeswax finish for a characterful look. Measuring H9x W15cm, it's £45.10 at Jim Lawrence.



Featuring a screwless faceplate with a glass surround and polished chrome trim, this Crystal CT 13A double plug socket in white, available from Retrotouch, adds the perfect contemporary finishing touch to interiors. Measuring H9xW15, it costs £19.99.



This 45A cooker switch and 13A socket combination from Wickes is set into a brushed steel faceplate with rounded corners, H9xW15cm, £19.49.

TAPS

The kitchen faucet has moved on from producing a standard hot and cold flow, with many of the latest models offering instant boiling water functionality and built-in filters, and

incorporating pull-out hoses. For a traditional Belfast or butler sink, opt for a classic bridge mixer in a brass, nickel or pewter finish. Modern kitchens look fantastic fitted with statement or cleanlined designs in polished chrome or stainless steel.



Insinkerator's 3N1 tap offers a choice of filtered steaming hot, hot and cold water from one fixture, removing the need for a kettle. With its ergonomic, minimalist design, the tap comes in several colours, including Natural Stone (shown), Orange, Chrome and Peel White, to match any scheme. The 3N1 measures H30cm and is priced on application.



Bringing the kitchen into the digital age, the electronic PuraVida mixer tap by Hansgrohe mixes a streamlined design with a brushed stainless-steel or polished-chrome finish. The H29.5cm pivoting spout is electronically operated to control flow and temperature, indicated by a coloured LED ring and selected by a click or twist action. From £1,908.



This Apex Professional tap from Caple is finished in brushed stainless steel, offering a contemporary, flexible design. It features a pull-out hose, which makes it easy to clean large pots and pans, and rinse away washing-up residue from the sides of the bowl. The H74.5cm tap has a single-lever control and is priced around £263.



Perrin & Rowe's standalone Hand Rinse tap, from its kitchen collection, is a practical addition to the worktop, with its easy-to-use, pull-out 120cm hose complete with insulated handle. This solid brass tap is available in a chrome, pewter or nickel finish to complement any style of kitchen, and allows hot, cold or mixed water to be diverted by pressing the button on the handle. Priced on application.



The Clear Mono mixer tap from Wickes is perfect for modern kitchens, thanks to its clean lines and polished chrome finish. With single-lever operation and a swivelling body, the compact H20cm tap will fit well into kitchens where space is at a premium. Priced £82.50, it provides easily controllable temperature and flow, and is suitable for high-pressure water systems.



Touch & Pour Systems' Filter tap features a pipe-in-pipe design, which separates the filtered stream of water from the standard tap water. The faucet comes in two spout designs to suit both contemporary and traditional kitchen schemes in a chrome finish, and includes a back flush system, which means that the filter can last up to nine months. Priced on application. +

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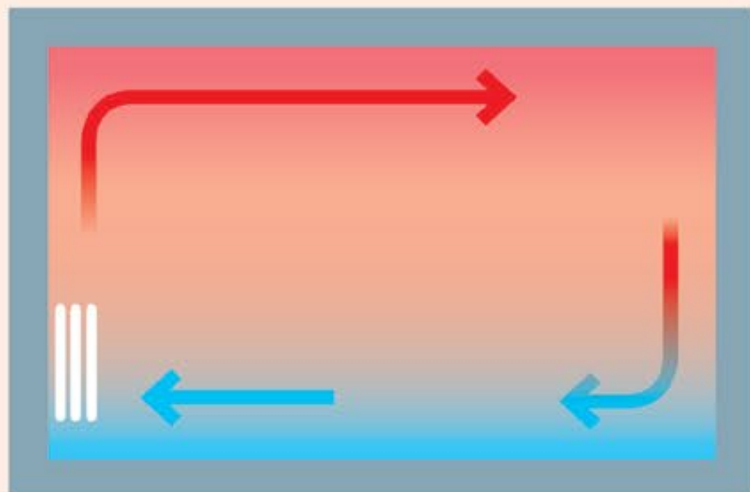
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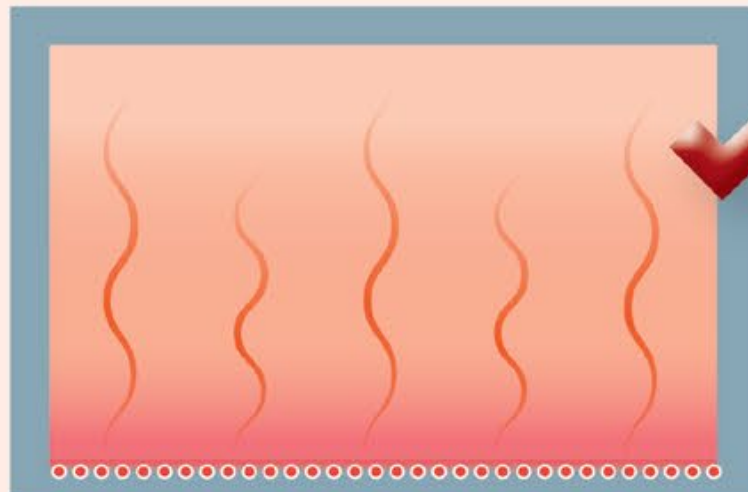
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Must-have appliances



Stay-clean extractor

If you like the modern finish of stainless steel and want it to look as new for years to come, the 6th Sense chimney hood from Whirlpool's Fusion line is a great choice. Its iXelium stainless-steel finish acts as a barrier against dirt, grease and chemicals in cleaning products, preserving the metal's natural shine, and prevents surface stains, scratches and corrosion from high temperatures. H67-110xW90xD50cm, it costs £450.



Customised refrigeration

Freestanding or built-in, the bespoke fridges and wine cellars in Kitchenaid's Vertigo range can be customised to include a freezer drawer, multi-temperature apartment and adjustable shelving. Complete with an even-airflow system to preserve fresh produce, it features soft-close drawers and dual-movement hinges. The KRXF 9030 integrated fridge with adjustable shelves, LED lighting, icemaker, and no-frost soft-close system, is from £11,520 for H205xW89xD66cm.



Discreet downdraft fan

Great for a small kitchen where room for an overhead cooker hood is limited, or in an open-plan space to keep sightlines clear, Blanco's Abajo downdraft extractor sits discreetly in the worktop next to a hob, reducing food odour and air moisture during cooking. Available as a single unit to fit near any hob, or as a modular system, it features touch controls, quiet 45dB operation and two power levels. From £5,490 for the extractor unit with two hobs, as shown, W92.5xD54cm.



Multifunctional microwave

Cook meals quickly and easily with the stainless-steel CM120 built-in wall microwave from Caple. The 17-litre-capacity model fits a typical D30cm unit and features all the cook, defrost and warm settings of a standard design, but also has a 1000W grill function – perfect for browning dishes or melting toppings. There are preset cooking modes for simple food preparation, plus child lock. H38xW59.5xD32cm, including frame, it costs £279.

Invest in the latest innovative technology for your kitchen to create an up-to-date practical space that perfectly suits your needs



Smart hob

With functions for precise cooking, and a digital display, AEG's MaxiSense electric induction hob is a hi-tech solution. Its flexible zones mean pans of all sizes can be used on areas with a cross marker – the hob heats only the area covered by the pan. The touch-control slider for fine-tuning heat intensity makes it easy to control the temperature, and cooking can be paused and resumed at the touch of a button. £899 for W78xD52cm.



Time-saving dishwasher

Promising to clean and dry dishes within an hour, the Whirlpool ADP 900 IX dishwasher uses its 6th Sense technology to automatically adjust water and temperature based on the level of dirt on dishes. It is rated A+++ for energy efficiency, and features include multi-zone settings to choose which basket to wash, an automatic self-cleaning filter system, and a humidity condensing fan that activates during drying to prevent moisture build-up. It costs £599 for H85xW60xD59cm.



Compact range cooker

Combining slimline traditional styling with a contemporary induction hob top, Smeg's latest addition to its collection of cookers is a great mix of old and new. The TR931 Victoria cooker features a 63-litre-capacity oven, with functions including an even-heat-distribution air-circulation system, as well as a 65-litre auxiliary oven and grill, while the induction hob has five zones of different sizes. Measuring H91xW90xD60cm, the TR931 Victoria cooker costs around £2,199.



Professional-style oven

Vacuum-packing food and cooking it at a low temperature in a steam oven enhances its flavour and texture, prevents it from burning and avoids shrinkage caused by fast cooking at high temperatures. For restaurant-quality dishes at home, use AEG's Vacuum Sealer, H29xW59xW57cm, then ProCombi SousVide oven, H59xW59xD57cm (£1,600 in total), to steam meals at one of three levels from 54°C to 80°C, or use the oven to grill, bake or roast. +

Easy updates

Decorating ideas

Wall tiles



The Arabesque and Mediterranean designs of Fired Earth's Marrakech Ourika tiles are hand-decorated onto glazed terracotta tiles with uneven edges and distressed to create an aged, but elegant, appearance. Exclusive to Fired Earth, the tiles cost £17.50 individually, or £605.36 per m², and each measure W17xL17cm.



Get creative with Walls & Floors' Wall Scrabble tiles, featuring every letter in the alphabet – you could spell out your name or a phrase. They come in cream or white, plus there are plain tiles so you can space out the design. The Wall Scrabble tiles cost £4.95 each and measure W10xL10cm; the matching plain tiles cost £28.25 per m².



If you're looking to create a colourful, retro feel in your kitchen, Mandarin Stone's Crackle Glaze tiles are perfect. Available in an array of six colours, including Menta (green) shown here, with a high-gloss surface, this collection is very much on-trend. The tiles cost £40 per m², with a choice of W7.5xL15cm or W15xL15cm.

Wall coverings



The pretty floral motif on the Nora wallpaper from Sandberg is inspired by the heavily patterned designs of William Morris, and is reminiscent of the influential Arts and Crafts period. A versatile botanical print, it is shown here in a contemporary kitchen setting in the blue, white and silver colourway (also available in grey, white and silver). The Nora wallpaper costs £60 per roll.



Cheerful and bright, the colour Lemon Miwi, used on the wall above, is part of Little Greene's Retrospective collection of paints inspired by 1960s and 1970s style. Migrants from the West Indies brought the colour to Britain in the early to mid-1960s, when it was used on internal walls and sometimes externally. It costs £43.50 for a 2.5-litre pot of intelligent matt emulsion.



This Acorn Spot design, from the 1970s-chic range of Orla Kiely wallpapers created for Harlequin, combines eye-catching shades of Sea Blue and Poppy, and features a repeating acorn-cup pattern with a geometric look. Perfect for creating a feature wall in both contemporary or retro kitchens, Acorn Spot wallpaper comes in a choice of three colourways and costs £55 per roll.

Whether you're planning a large new kitchen or simply updating your existing space, it's the finishing touches that will add personality and wow-factor to your design

Window treatments



Easily give your scheme a new look by simply unhooking one window blind and clipping on another with the Fabric Changer design from Bloc Blinds. It is pictured here in the Jet Black Dimout fabric, which is designed to let in light without compromising on privacy. Made-to-measure blinds start at £59.99 for a H100xW100cm window.



Great for a traditional or farmhouse-style kitchen, the new Cockerel fabric collection by Vanessa Arbuthnott has a charming simplicity. Made from linen and organic cotton, the Feather and Egg design in Raspberry (there are four colourways) features feather and egg motifs and costs £45 per m. A made-to-measure service is available.



Wood blinds look stylish, but if you want a more practical solution for your kitchen, Hillarys' Illusions faux-wood Venetian blind in Oakwood (shown with 50mm slats) is ideal. Flame-retardant in wipe-clean PVC, it is also available with 38mm and 63mm slats, plus six colourways. Made-to-measure, from £76 for H60xW42cm, including fitting.

Flooring



These distressed Courchevel wood plank-effect tiles are inspired by the weather-beaten look typically seen on ski chalets. Shown here in Silver Blue Natural, the anti-slip tiles measure W15xL90cm and cost from £55.20 per m², from The Baked Tile Company. Four other colourways, including Bleached Oak and Arctic White, are available.



This classic Aged Gevrey brushed French limestone flooring from Martin Moore has the warm appearance of natural stone and features a variety of shades, from soft chestnut to taupe. The tiles have a pillowed edge for a naturally worn look and are non-slip. Measuring W45cm in random lengths, they cost from £144 per m².



Make use of bold pattern and colour for a statement floor with the Shoreditch Natural patchwork tile from The Baked Tile Company. Each four-tile pattern comes in a mixed box so that you can lay out your own design. Made from porcelain and measuring W44xL44cm, the tiles are also suitable for walls and cost from £48 per m². ►

Lighting



New for spring, the pastel shades of the Eikon pendant lamp have a distinctly modern feel. With a turned ash wood head and removable metal shade, it is available in green (shown), black, white, blue or yellow and comes with a textile cable. Measuring H35xDia.26cm, it costs £183.06 from Clippings.



The Hector lamp from Original BTC produces a soft, warm glow, diffused through its retro-style bone-china shade, which is made in the company's factory in the Staffordshire Potteries. It comes with a ceiling rose as well as the company's trademark braided flex. Measuring H29.5xDia.23.5cm, it costs £155.



This Antonio steel pendant shade – the perfect finishing touch for a kitchen-diner – has a retro-industrial look with a vintage-style twisted cord and antique-brass finish. The lamp's drop can be adjusted from 23cm to 149cm. Measuring H23xDia.30cm, the Antonio pendant costs £80 from John Lewis.

Worktops



Inspired by the appearance of natural stone, Silestone by Cosentino's Nebula Alpha work surfaces are made from more than 90 per cent natural quartz, with random veining detail for an authentic look. Durable and hygienic, it is scratch- and impact-resistant and offers hardness, low absorption and a bacteriostatic property. Shown in colourway Ariel, the range starts from £400 per m².



For a smooth, toffee-coloured surface with dark-brown woodgrain detail and intricate figuring, this Zebrano solid-wood worktop is supplied fully sanded to a 150-grit finish and with square edges. The durable design is from Worktop Express, priced from £255 for W62x L200xD4cm. Hotrods (as shown) can be added for an extra £40 and allow hot pans to rest on the worktop without burning the surface.



Natural stone works well for worktops as it's exceptionally hardwearing and easy to clean, as well as good-looking. In addition, the pores of the surface are effectively blocked in treated stone, so germs and bacteria cannot fester or be absorbed into the worktop – crucial in the kitchen, where hygiene is important. This stylish Italian Basalt worktop, from £107 per m², is from Stone Age. +

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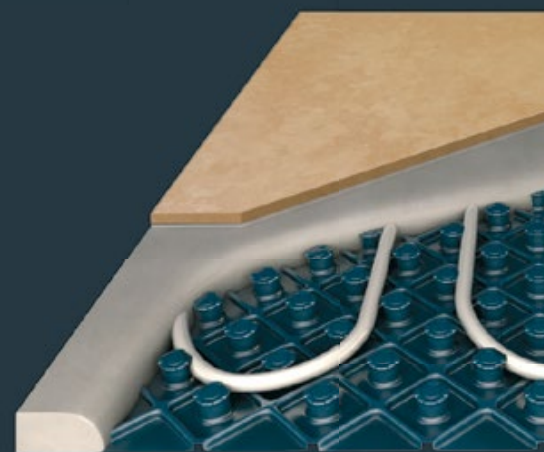
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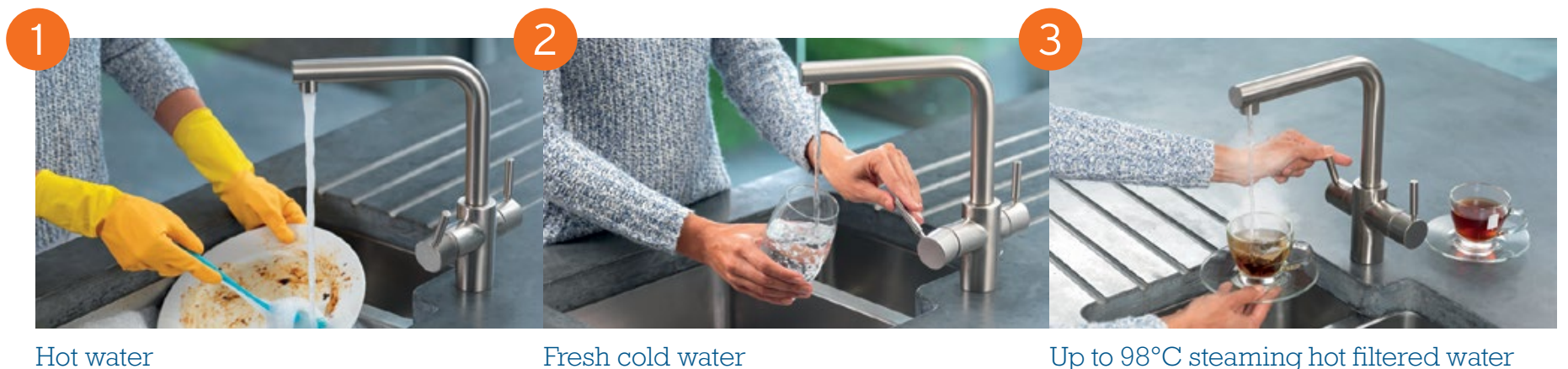


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